

Child Welfare Partners Committee (CWPC)

Meeting Notes

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Zoom Meeting

Members in attendance: Dawn Kekstadt, Janee Harvey, Susan Smalley, Darin Thompson (*reserve for Jean Slaybaugh*), Debbie Orduna, Liam Healy, Matt Majeski, Emily Blomme, Chris Koeplin, Heidi Kammer-Hodge, Kristin Konchalski, Stephen Quirk, and Teresa Burke

Members not in attendance:

Observers in attendance: Kristie Oliver

Summary of Meeting:

Temporary Support for Residential Providers

Janee provided a brief update on the status of temporary support for residential providers. It continues to be a work in progress, but she is hoping to have more information this week.

Family First in the Field

Committee members engaged in discussion regarding various Family First initiatives to gain insight regarding what is going well and what has posed challenges from both a private and public perspective.

- ***Kinship***

Janee provided an update regarding strategies to expand current kinship support. These efforts include: (1) Kinship Navigator- it's most likely that this will be the last year for federal funding for the Kinship Navigator funding so fiscal strategies to continue and to expand the program are being explored. Additionally, the program manager is working with the current provider agency to create a manual for the program to assist with ease of replication moving forward. (2) Kinship stipend- consideration is being given to providing a limited payment to kinship caregivers. A rule change would be needed and the topic is currently being put in front of caucus staff. It is anticipated that making the payment time limited would encourage kinship caregivers to go through the process to become licensed foster parents. (3) Childcare- kinship caregivers may struggle to obtain affordable child care due to requirements for child care assistance. DHS is currently working on determining fiscal impact and a funding source to potentially develop additional child care support for kinship caregivers. Committee members discussed the challenges that the current child care assistance rate poses to securing child care. (4) Child Safety Conferences (CSCs) - CSCs result in a high rate of children staying with their parents. Additionally, they are key in identifying relatives and fictive kin so that if a removal is required, a child can be placed with someone they know and have relationship with.

- ***Family Voice***

The committee's provider members discussed some of the challenges and opportunities they see to increasing family voice. This includes increasing the use of informal supports to assist with activities such as transportation and family interaction. Both DHS and provider committee members agreed that there appear to be areas that are more open to implementing various opportunities around

family engagement. There was discussion regarding strategies to support additional acceptance and practice in other areas. Heidi provided an update regarding the efforts of the provider FCS workgroup. She shared that they are working on increased educational initiatives as well as a survey to assist in determining and communicating provider needs. The committee members discussed the challenges that COVID-19 has created for communication, workforce, and education in this area.

- ***Enhanced Foster Homes***

The committee discussed that the number of enhanced foster homes remains low and that the existing homes are rarely at capacity. Members discussed the potential of CWPC to play a role in growing the program. The committee discussed the potentially negative impact a child's challenging behavior may look in a referral. Additionally, the committee discussed the need to keep referral information up to date. Janee agreed to follow up with the foster care program manager to determine if there are opportunities for CWPC to support the growth of the enhanced foster home program.

- ***QRTP assessment***

Chris shared that Amerigroup is no longer requiring a prior authorization for the QRTP assessment. Additionally, they are recycling through denied claims. Chris reported that she anticipates that these activities will resolve the challenges providers have been having with getting paid for the service.

- ***Family Centered Services***

Heidi provided an update regarding progress with implementing family centered services from a provider perspective. She shared that there is considerable movement toward consistency and evidence-based practice. More people are aware of SBC and trying to incorporate it into practice. However, fidelity can be a challenge and providers have concerns about meeting expectations. Additionally since training is being rolled out on different timelines, there have been challenges with getting agreement between providers, DHS, and courts. The change process has impacted workforce as staff can become frustrated. Committee members discussed various options for assisting in addressing these concerns. Dr. Christensen (SBC developer) is providing a training for judges. Additionally he is talking with the FCS workgroup about strategies for educating various stakeholders. DHS staff continues to be trained and practice champions will assist with supporting from a service area level. Documentation changes are also being implemented on January 1, 2021. It is anticipated that this will assist with some of the communication concerns on a case level. Committee members agreed that greater familiarity should assist with greater buy-in.

- ***Contractual Requirement***

Providers shared that insurance coverage is becoming considerably more costly and more difficult to find. Darrin reported that he is aware of this concern and is working with DAS on a potential master agreement. Kristie will send Darrin information from the national provider discussion.

- ***Workforce impact***

Committee members discussed the impact COVID-19 is having on attrition and retention rates as well as workload implications. Providers identified challenges with ensuring staff safety while meeting the needs of the children and families they serve, challenges keeping nursing staff, safety

concerns around restraints, and challenges with a high rate of staff being out due to testing positive or quarantining. Janee reported that DHS will be updating guidance. She asked if providers are able to obtain needed PPE. Providers agreed that they have been able to obtain supplies, but would welcome any assistance DHS is able to provide.

- **Next meeting: December 10th from 1pm – 3pm**
Zoom meeting